



WSBF

Washington School for the Blind  
Foundation

## Helping Washington's Blind Youth Achieve Success

### Your Dollars in Action

Thanks to the generosity of your contributions, blind students have been able to access assistive technology through the WSBF. Vaughn Brown, current Washington State School for the Blind (WSSB) student, and alumni Mai Nguyen, are among the students who have benefited. Vaughn and Mai presented their personal stories of how



this technology impacts their everyday lives to guests at the WSBF Benefit Dinner and Concert, June 25, 2006. Here are excerpts of their inspirational presentations.

### In their own words

#### Vaughn Brown

*"My experience with assistive technology... started when I was six months old...when it was discovered that I had hearing loss."*



"Thanks to hearing aids, and later cochlear implants, I learned to listen and talk. But I'm not here to talk about being deaf. I am here to talk about being blind and the technology available to make my life easier.

"Thanks to computer technology, I can produce work equal to my sighted peers. "Jaws for Windows," a speech output program for my computer, reads the text off the screen so that I can do research on the Internet, write in word processors, and print in both Braille and print formats. This enables me and other visually impaired or blind people to attend school, hold a job, produce quality work and compete with sighted peers."

"As students or jobholders note-taking is an important skill. By using a variety of devices, such as Voice Notes, Braille Notes, and laptops, we can keep ourselves organized. Thanks to the Foundation, I have a Braille Note. This device is similar to a portable computer. With the Braille Note, I have the capability to use the word processor, the Internet, calculators, email, address books, and a daily planner—all technologies that help blind and visually impaired persons. Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) technology is now being used to help us navigate the streets. I can just plug it into my Braille Note."

"By using these technologies, the difficulties of equal access are reduced. Thus, I am unafraid of facing academics."

*-Vaughn Brown, current WSSB Student*

#### Mai Nguyen

*"10 years ago, when I was attending the blind school in Vietnam, I never dreamed that one day I would come to the United States."*



"I never dreamed that I would be able to access technology like other sighted people. I did not dare to even hope because technology was not available for blind people in Vietnam. I knew that without technology, I could only finish 9th grade. However, despite the obstacles, I met tremendous sponsors who gave me much support and unconditional love. Their love and support enabled me to come to the U.S. to further my education."

"During my second year in the U.S., I came to the Washington State School for the Blind and once again met many caring teachers who gave me love and support. They did not mind going the extra mile helping me, especially when it came to technology. They taught me how to use the talking dictionary, the calculator, the Braille 'N Speak and many others. The teachers worked with me one-on-one to make sure that I had the skills needed to enter college. At the end of the year, I was able to use the skills I learned to go to college and continued with my education. "

"Now, I am no longer afraid because I know that I am lucky to have wonderful sponsors and teachers who give me love and support. I am no longer afraid because I know that with the help of assistive technology, I will be able to live a normal life. After I graduate with my Master's degree in 2008, I would like to be a teacher and teach students with visual impairments."

*-Mai Nguyen, WSSB alumni*



Thank you.